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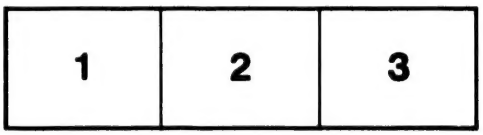

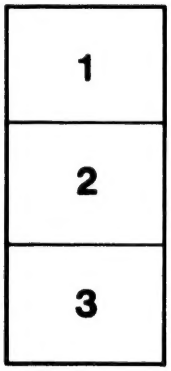

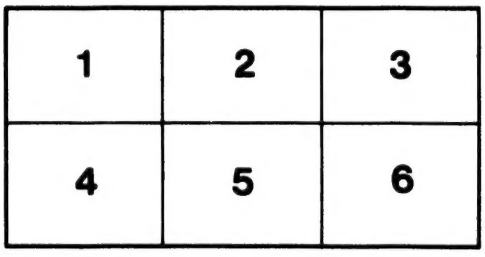

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

The discovery of gold in British Columbia will give a vast impetus to the growth of our power on the western side of the American continent, and will hasten forward the completion of that line of railway from New Brunswick to the Pacific, which will be of such incalculable importance to the commerce of England. In its geographical position British Columbia is most favourably situated. The coast, abundantly indented with numerous bays and inlets, is washed by the Pacific, and the fine island of Vancouver stands before the southern portion of a vast natural breakwater, protecting the mouth of Fraser River and the high road to the gold region.

Of the climate of this part of the Hudson's Bay Territory, now formed into a British colony, we are at length beginning to learn something of a reliable nature. A gentleman who has resided there for eight years says that, for the beauty of its scenery, the salubrity of its climate, and its general adaptation to commerce, the territory on the shores of the Pacific cannot be surpassed by any country in the world; the soil, too, is fertile in the highest degree, and possesses great agricultural capabilities. The face of the country presents a succession of mountain ridges, valleys, and plains.

That portion of the country which lies between the Cascade Mountains and the Pacific is, we are informed, subject to a remarkably equable temperature, the mean being about fifty-four degrees Fahrenheit. The equable character of the climate is probably occasioned by the circumstance of the prevailing summer winds being from the north, and laden with the cooling influences of the Polar Sea: and that the winter winds, coming from the west, the south, and the south-east—except the latter, which comes from the snows of the mountains—tend to prevent that degree of cold which would otherwise prevail. There are about four months' of winter, generally beginning in November and lasting till March. Snow seldom lies more than a week on the ground; and though there are frequent rains they are not heavy. Slight frosts occur as early as September. In the neighbourhood of Vancouver fruit-trees blossom early in April; in the middle of May peas are a foot high and strawberries in blossom. All fruits and vegetables are as early there as in this country. Grass grows to the tops of the hills. According to Lieutenant Wilkes, one hundred days were distributed in seventy-six fair, nineteen cloudy, and eleven rainy. In many respects the climate of the middle section is less favourable: it is subject to droughts, and is warmer in summer and colder in winter. The air, however, is pure and healthy. The eastern section, under the snows of the Rocky Mountains, cannot be praised for its climate. It is subject to great and sudden changes of temperature—occasionally going through all the gradations of summer, autumn, and winter in a single day.

Respecting the western section of the colony, we learn that it is peculiarly well adapted for agricultural operations. In some places there is a deep black vegetable loam; in others a light brown loam. The hills are of basalt, stone, and slate. The undulating surface is well watered and well wooded—bearing pine, spruce, red and white oak, ash, arbutus, cedar, arbor vitæ, poplar, maple, willow, cherry, and tew; besides underwood of hazel and roses. All kinds of grain can be procured in abundance. Pears and apples succeed admirably, and the different vegetables produced in England yield there most abundant crops. In the middle section, which is 1000 feet higher than the western, excellent crops and large stocks of cattle have, it is said, been raised by the missionaries near the Crusade Mountains. The eastern section seems little adapted for agriculture. However, grain and vegetables have been produced at Fort Hall; and cattle thrive without the necessity of being housed in winter. A market for the timber will eventually spring up in the Pacific, and there is abundance of water-power for manufactories. The Fraser and other rivers abound in salmon, sturgeon, cod, carp, sole, flounders, perch, herrings, and eels, as well as crabs, oysters, and other shell fish. The elk, the deer, antelopes, bears, wolves, foxes, musk rats, and martens, abound in the western section; buffaloes are met with in great numbers. In the spring and autumn the rivers are alive with geese, ducks, and other waterfowl.—*Canadian News.*